

In the Claims

1 - 17 (Canceled).

18 (Previously Presented). A method for providing failover protection in a data communication link having a plurality of transmission media, comprising:

sending data from the first device to the second device, in conjunction with a first source identifier, via a first transmission medium;

detecting a source identifier in all data received by the first device via said first transmission medium; and

determining when the source identifier of data received by the first device equals the source identifier of data sent by the first device, that a failure has occurred in the first transmission medium; and

deactivating said first transmission medium; and

activating a second transmission medium.

19 - 29 (Canceled).

30 (Previously Presented). A method for providing failover protection in a bidirectional data communication network, comprising:

- activating a first communications link for transfer of data from a first device to a second device;

- sending data from the first device to the second device, together with a first source identifier;

- sending data from the second device to the first device, together with a second source identifier;

- detecting at the first device the source identifier of all data received by the first device;

- detecting at the second device the source identifier of all data received by the second device; and,

- determining, either

- when the source identifier of data received by the first device equals the source identifier of data sent by the first device, or

- when the source identifier of data received by the second device equals the source identifier of data sent by the second device,

- that a failure has occurred in the first communications link, and

- deactivating the first communications link; and

- activating a second communications link.